



The Pandemic's Impact on Pet Care and Vets



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Last year, an estimated 12+ million U.S. households got new pets. We saw a boom in pet ownership as people longed for furry companions while they were in isolation. On the positive side, it is wonderful that people were able to have the time to bond and train their new pet, but it has also significantly impacted veterinary care.

Across the country, veterinary practices have been hit with a spike in demand for our services. Practice teams have been working extremely hard through the pandemic to keep up with the demand while trying to manage staff shortages and under the strain of new protocols to keep everyone safe. For example, to follow state recommendations due to COVID 19, we couldn't allow clients in the building with their pets under routine circumstances. No one is more excited to welcome you back in, now that restrictions are lifted, than we are!

VETERINARY SHORTAGE

Like us, many practices have had to temporarily stop welcoming new clients, alter appointment hours and hire additional staff amid a shortage of medically trained veterinary professionals. Even before the pandemic, vets were struggling to find help and fill staff shortages. Veterinary schools are relatively few and cannot graduate enough veterinarians to fill the industry void. Many staff members are working long hours and additional shifts.

PATIENCE AND KINDNESS

Please be patient and kind with your veterinary staff. Fatigue, anxiety and depression already plagued our profession before the pandemic! Please keep in mind the following when you think about care for your pet:

Most practices are booking well ahead of where they normally would. For routine care it may take several weeks to get an appointment. So, anticipate your needs and your pet's appointment well ahead of time when you can.

You may also have to wait in the office more than you are used to, as practices try to fit in urgent care cases to an already booked schedule. Sometimes you may even be asked to move your appointment.

Know your local emergency hospital in the event you need urgent care that your veterinarian might not be able to accommodate.

So, the next time you come in for a visit or call for an appointment, please remember to be nice to your veterinarian and their staff. Chances are they have had a long, hard day. Understand the pressures we are under, and know that your veterinarian and the staff are committed to doing their best to meet your pet's needs and those of our entire community of pet owners. ♦

